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In view of both the amendments presented above and the following discussion, the Applicants submit that none of the claims now pending in the application are non-enabling or obvious under the respective provisions of 35 U.S.C. §112 and §103. Thus, the Applicants believe that all of these claims are now in allowable form.

It is to be understood that the Applicants, by amending the claims, do not acquiesce to the Examiner's characterizations of the art of record or to Applicants' subject matter recited in the pending claims. Further, the Applicants are not acquiescing to the Examiner's statements as to the applicability of the art of record to the pending claims by filing the instant responsive amendments.

IN THE SPECIFICATION

The Applicants have amended the specification and Abstract to correct minor typographical errors and to make other corrections suggested by the Examiner. Such corrections do not add any new subject matter to the application.

REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 57

The Examiner has rejected claim 57 under 35 U.S.C. §112, ¶2, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention. The Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection.

The Applicants have cancelled claim 57. Therefore the rejection is now considered moot.

35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-57

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-57 as being obvious and unpatentable under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §103(a). In particular, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-57 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,128,601 to Van Horne et al. (hereinafter "Van Horne") in view of U.S. Patent Publication US2002/0019875 to Garrett

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et al. (hereinafter "Garrett") and in view of U.S. Patent 6,023,499 to Mansey et al. (hereinafter "Mansey"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants' independent claims 1 and 53 recite:

"1. A method for providing client access to the Internet or other network, comprising:
 offering, at a first point of service, a Local Area Network (LAN) connected to the Internet or other network;
 connecting at least one client computer to said LAN;
 configuring networking parameters of each of said at least one client computer;
 establishing a secure tunnel between the service provider and each of said at least one client computer, such that the service provider provides Internet or other network service through the secure tunnel to only each one of said at least one client computer;
 negotiating, at the first point of service, the network usage terms and prices with each one of said at least one client computer, and
 providing the Internet or other network service at the first point of service to each one of the at least one client computer in accordance with the network usage terms and prices via a second point of service associated with the service provider." (emphasis added).

"53. A method for providing metered access to the Internet, comprising:
 accessing, via a local area network (LAN), the Internet, utilizing a first point-of-access of a service provider;
 establishing a secure tunnel with said service provider by exchanging authentication certificates with said first point-of-access of said service provider;
 negotiating network usage terms for Internet Access with said service provider at said first point of access to the Internet; and
 accessing said Internet from said service provider according to said negotiated usage terms via a second point of access of said service provider coupled between said first point of access and the Internet." (emphasis added).

The test under 35 U.S.C. §103 is not whether an improvement or a use set forth in a patent would have been obvious or non-obvious; rather the test is whether the claimed invention, considered as a whole, would have been obvious. Jones v. Hardy, 110 USPQ 1021, 1024 (Fed. Cir. 1984) (emphasis added). Moreover, the invention as a whole is not restricted to the specific subject matter claimed, but also embraces its properties and the problem it solves. In re Wright, 6 USPQ 2d 1959, 1961 (Fed. Cir.

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1988) (emphasis added). Van Horne, Garrett and Mansey singly and in combination fail to teach or suggest the Applicants' invention as a whole.

In particular, the Van Horne reference discloses connecting a plurality of client systems to a server system via access ports and associated communications linkages and providing electronic communications network access for the client systems through the server system. One common means is via an Internet service provider (ISP), who provides access to the Internet for individual users. The ISP system, in turn is connected to the Internet, typically via high-speed communications line to an internet setter such as the nearest super computer center forming part of the back bone of the Internet (see Van Horne, Col. 1, Lines 21-42, and Col. 4, Lines 10-24).

Garrett discloses the use of point-to-point tunnels between customers and their selected service/service providers. The point-to-point protocol is used to both encapsulate traffic and provide initialization in authentication procedures analogous to those used with dial up access (see Garrett, Page 3, Paragraph 0020).

The Mansey reference discloses "for the present invention, the standard intelligent peripheral 14 has been enhanced with the addition of a conventional web server 26 to interface the Intelligent peripheral to the Internet 30. This allows personal computers 32 and 33 connected to the Internet to access the intelligent peripheral 14 to set up different enhanced voice service. With respect to the present invention, a customer can setup a conference call via the Internet and during the call receive real-time billing information on a personal computer 32. The software for implementing the present billing technique is stored within the components of the intelligent peripheral 14. The present billing technique is best understood in the context of an automated conference call, one that is established and managed without requiring intervention by a human operator. Nevertheless, one skilled in the art will understand and appreciate that the present billing techniques can be applied to other forms of enhanced voice service and even other types of communication networks than just telephone systems" (see Mansey, Col. 3, Line 55 to Col. 4, Line 5).

Even if the three references could somehow be operably combined, the

... providing point to point tunnels between the client

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